



To the Editor

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Community, state faced with pressing health problem

To the Editor:

To anyone who read the article entitled, "Consultant Doubts Widespread Problem in Libby" which appeared in the June 5, 2002 edition of *The Western News*, I would like to clarify two points. The first being the statement quoting me as saying "Holy Cow!" To that I say, "Thank you Matt, you did a fine job of interpreting my comment." The second statement re-

ferring to my agreeing with Dr. Wheeler is simply the result of a typographical oversight on the part of the writer. Anyone who knows what I stand for should be able to understand my views on Grace's newest device (Dr. Wheeler) to manipulate the numbers. (Your apologies are accepted, Matt.)

On a more serious side, our community and state are now faced with a more pressing prob-

lem than the stigma that some feel has come upon us since November 1999.

Of the 800 people diagnosed with lung abnormalities within our community, up to 90 percent could be denied coverage under the Grace medical plan, but if even 10 percent were denied coverage, this could mean a severe financial liability that someone will have to pay for.

This may not be your problem

today, but in time, this could become everyone's problem. If you want your tax dollars to pay for hospital care and medication for your friends and neighbors, continue to stick your heads in the sand and ignore what is happening. We need input, we need suggestions, and we need solutions. We do not need our health restored by the stroke of a corporate pen.

Gayla Benefield